BESSIE'S FISHING

One morning when spring was in her teens,
A morn to a poet's wishing,
All tinted in delicate grays and greens,
Miss Bessie and I went fishing.

I in my rough-and-tumble clothes,
With my face at the sunshine's mercy;
She with her hat tipped down to her nose,
And her nose tipped vice versa.

I with my rod, my rest, and my books,
And a hamper of luncheon recesses;
She with the bait of her comely looks,
And the seine of her golden tresses.

So we sat down in the shade of a dyke,
Where the white pond lilies teeter,
And I went to fishing like quaint old Ike,
And she like Simon Peter.

All day I lay in the light of her eyes,
And dreamily watched and waited;
But the fish were cunning and wouldn't rise,
And the baiter alone was baited.

So when the time for departure came,
My bag was as flat as a flounder;
But Bessie had nearly hooked her game—
A hundred-and-eighty-pounder.

—Unidentified.

"I can never thank you, Miss Carew," began Tom Stanton for the sixth time within half an hour.

He stood in front of the big, open fireplace in the Carew sitting room, very wet and disheveled. His overcoat and hat, soaked likewise, hung on the back of a chair before the fire. A pair of skates lay on the floor.

"In only one way, you may," answered Diana, at last.

She spoke as if she had suddenly determined to say something upon which she had been pondering. Each time Stanton had tried to thank her she had artfully turned the conversation into foreign channels and ignored his expressions of gratitude.

"Give me your solemn oath," she continued, "that you will never ask me to marry you, and I am fully thanked for what I have done. Yes, I know that sounds presumptuous, Mr. Stanton, but nowadays persons labor under the delusion that if a girl does

"Don't—don't dare to say it!"

some—O some little thing like I did—for a man, that he is in honor bound to ask her to marry him. I won't have it, so promise."

She looked as well as he did in heavy wet clothing and with his hair curling recklessly about his broad, white forehead.

"But you save—" he began, but was interrupted.

"Don't—don't dare to say it! I did not!" And Miss Carew stamped her foot emphatically.

"But you did; you saw me floundering about among the chunks of ice and you ran all the way, at a great risk to yourself, and pulled me out. I was foolish to skate on such dangerous ice. I could never have crawled out before I was frozen—so there! I must refute your denial. What do you call it, Miss Carew?"

"Never mind, only give me your promise. It was mere luck that I happened to be in the window of my room and saw you go in. I know the air holes in the slough, living so near. Your promise?" she said interrogatively.

"Is that quite fair?" he asked. "Suppose—"

"No, I won't! I would never, never marry a man who thought I had saved his life even if it were years and years afterwards. I should always feel that he asked me out of gratitude."

"But I won't feel that way," said Stanton, honestly feeling it might be true, but smiling down at the look of despair she gave him.

"There you are, this very minute," she argued, "before you have known me an hour, already contemplating it. O please promise!"

Diana was so earnest that Stanton stopped smiling and turned his other side to the fire before answering.

"I'll promise on the condition that you will permit me to continue our acquaintance—if I may come to see you and learn to be friends. I could not thank you in a lifetime for what you have done, so we will let that pass. It was brave and—"

He was going to say sweet, but refrained wisely. Neither did he tell her he had the wet belt and tie which she had knotted together. He would keep that always.

"Very well, now promise," she said, extending her hand.

He took it in his. "I promise, Miss Carew, never to ask you to marry me out of gratitude," he said.

"No, no, no!" she cried, hopelessly, and taking her hand abruptly from him. "Promise never, under any circumstances, to ask me to marry you."

He hesitated while he looked earnestly into her eyes. And because he saw a troubled, eager expectancy in her expression he took her hand again and said, "I promise." But he was sorry the moment the words had left his lips.

Now that she had extracted her promise Diana chatted on merrily with Stanton, and long before he was dry enough to go out of doors she had learned why she had never seen him before.

He had only the night before come to Cedar Rapids and, in wandering about to get his bearings in the town before taking up his duties with his firm, had come upon the Little Slough. He had secured some skates at a nearby shop and—Diana knew the rest.

In due time he came to call. Only one subject was tabooed when they were together, and that was the skating accident and the promise.

"Diana," said Tom one night—he had called her Diana for some time. "I did not promise to refrain from telling you I love you, and I do! I love you better than anything in life, and if you can't figure out some way out of my difficulty, I shall be sorry your were in your window that morning. I shall, Diana!" He tried to take her hands and to force her to look at him.

"Tom Stanton, don't you dare!" she said, laughing at his seriousness. "You are dangerously near breaking your promise, and I won't pull you out if you go over the brink as I did on the ice."

Almost a year after Diana had extracted her promise from Stanton she came into the room where he was waiting for her and sat down beside him on the couch.

"Have you a pencil and paper, Tom?" she asked. "I want you to figure something for me." She moved close to him.

"But first, Tom, are you quite, quite sure that you love me—that you would have loved me anyway? No—" she said, repelling his attempt to take her hands. "Tell me."

"Yes, positively sure, Diana," he said, earnestly. "Are you going to release me?"

"Nonsense!" she cried. "I just wanted to be sure; I will never release you from that promise."

Silence fell between them for a moment. He was thinking of how many times within the year she had raised his hopes, only to dash them to the ground again. And yet he loved her.

"Now put down the figures I tell

"Is it all figured out?"

you," she said, after a minute, "and don't ask questions. One."

He put a figure one on the paper.

Beside it a nine," said Diana. He did it.

"Naught! Four!" said Diana, excitedly.

"Very well," said Tom.

"Now divide it by four" she said.

"Four hundred and seventy-six," he read, when he finished. "Well, what of it?" He was mystified beyond expression.

"Is it all figured out?" she asked.

"Yes."

"And can't you see that 1904 is devisible by four and that it's leap year, and—O, Tom, I love you so. Won't you marry me? Please do," she cried.

And if taking her in his arms and holding her as if he would never let her go again was giving a positive answer, Diana's leap year proposal was accepted.—Ruby Douglas, in Boston Globe.

WEAKNESS OF STRONG MEN.

No One Absolutely Free from All Manner of Defect.

Those who are seeking through study of superior men to make themselves at least less inferior are often puzzled and baffled by the discovery of characteristics that seem absolutely incompatible with greatness. There is hardly a great man whose life is at all accurately known in whom there was not a weakness that would destroy an ordinary man—sometimes mental weakness, as utter lack of judgment; sometimes moral weakness; again, physical weakness.

But is there on record a single case of a great man who had not through his character a certain toughness of fiber which made him free from the common weakness of whining and rushing about for refuge at the first black lift of adversity? Is not that fundamental sense of insecurity, or inability to stand alone, the great enemy we all have to fight? Is it not the enemy that drives some to the false courage of drink, others to slink and crawl along the byways of indirection and crime, many, many others to resign the guidance of their destinies to some master or masters with hardly an effort to thing or do for themselves?—Saturday Evening Post.

WHY HE WAS NOT DISTURBED.

Clergyman's Explanation Disconcerted Would-Be Joker.

A clergyman who was traveling stopped at a hotel much frequented by wags and jokers.

The host, not being used to having a clergyman at his table, looked at him with surprise; the guests used all their raillery of wit upon him without eliciting a remark.

The clergyman ate his dinner quietly, apparently without observing the gibes and sneers of his neighbors.

One of them at last, in despair of his forbearance, said to him: "Well, I wonder at your patience! Have you not heard all that has been said to you?"

"Oh, yes; but I am used to it. Do you know who I am?"

"No, sir."

"Well, I will inform you. I am chaplain of a lunatic asylum. Such remarks have no effect upon me."—Short Stories.

The World Beautiful.

Oh, dwellers on the lovely earth,
Why will ye break your rest and mirth
To weary us with fruitless prayer?
Why will ye toil and take such care
For children's children yet unborn,
And garner store of strife and corn,
To gain a scarce remembered name,
Cumbered with lies and soiled with shame?
And if the gods care not for you,
What is this folly ye must do
To win some mortal's feeble heart?
Oh, fools! when each man plays his part,
And heeds his fellow little more
Than these blue waves that kiss the shore,
Take heed of how the daisies grow,
Oh, fools! and if ye could but know
How fair a world to you is given,
O brooder on the hills of heaven.

When for my sins thou drawst me forth,
Hadst thou forgot what this was worth
Thine own hand made? The tears of men,
The death of three score years and ten,
The trembling of the timorous race—
Had these things so bedimmed the place
Thine own hand made, thou couldst not know
To what a heaven the earth might grow,
If fear, beneath the earth were laid,
If hope failed not, nor love decayed.

—William Morris.

The End of All Armies.

We may really be on the verge of the millennium, for M. Emile Guarini has come to the conclusion that it will soon be possible to destroy armies by lightning. Receiving a shock from a wireless telegraph apparatus through an umbrella, he experimented with a Ruhmkorff coil, and found that shocks could be transmitted through the air with moderate currents. He concludes that the energy of 1,000 horsepower, at 100,000 volts, could be concentrated by antennae so as to destroy life at a distance of twelve miles. The present difficulty, which he believes will be soon overcome, is that of controlling and directing the electric waves.

Too much humility and an insincere heart lurk together in the shadows of hypocrisy.